

AD 542

Bubonic plague in Europe

AD 542

The most devastating plague the world has ever seen began to spread from Egypt along the great trade routes. It traveled through Asia Minor to Constantinople, to Greece, to Italy and even as far as the Rhine R. It raged for 52 yrs; In that time 100 million people are

estimated to have died - a large proportion
of the then-known world's population
when the trade routes declined
(at the decline of the Roman Empire)
the plague decreased.

Beginning of plague
in Constantinople

Spring 542

TOTILA won his great victory at Faenza. With a skillful pincer movement in which 300 Gothic lancea decided the battle, he routed a large Roman army, twice the size of his own. Within a short time the king was once again commanded 20,000 men.

Some strong Gothic forces were besieging the city of Florence to open the Via Cassia to Rome. At the approach of the imperial relieving

force, the Bettes withdrew a day's march north to the valley of MURIELLO, but there they inflicted a crushing defeat on the enemy. While the Roman army, shattered into small groups was hiding behind the walls of the cities of northern and central Italy, Totila broke through to southern Italy, where the imperial generals had least expected him.

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General paralysis caused by
the Great Plague.

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A great pestilence as desolous
as the Black Death (8 centuries later)
struck Constantinople. It seems
to have advanced Justinian's

The Italians might anathematize the Goths, but would not fight them.

By the end of 542 Totila had routed the imperial Armies in the field wherever he met them, had driven them all into a few fortified towns - Rome, Ravenna and some others - and was in effect master of Italy once more.

from north to south. He told his men in
hand is usually as a Henry V or a
Louis IX, protecting the population
of all violence and killing the
garrison that resorted from with a
majority of which the standard
murderers

A.D. 542

The first epidemic outbreak in Europe of which we have a proper record is that at Constantinople in A.D. 542

542 & 543 AD

The Bubonic plague that swept through much of the civilized world from 542 to 543 was reported by a witness, the historian PROCOPIUS, to have killed up to 10,000 people a day in Byzantium alone at the height of its virulence. Emperor JUSTINIAN caught the disease, but recovered.

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Both of the armies of Belsham and
of Cheroes were paralyzed by
an abnormally severe
outbreak of the plague.

542 AD

Bubonic plague

While Totila was in southern Italy, the Goths had not trouble obtaining provisions and here rich booty was waiting to be won. BENEVENTUM was taken. Even Cumae fell into Totila's hand, and it remained an important Gothic stronghold beyond the end of his kingship. At the same time the king began the siege of Naples where strong anti-imperial sentiments existed. After Totila had conquered the south

he initiated his 1st attempt to break Byzantine control of the sea; He was helped by surprise and by the elements. He cut off the most important supply lines of the imperial army and threatened Rome

542-543A0

Plague of Justinian near
Constantinople & in it